

To: Daniel.G.Buchsbaum@uscg.mil[Daniel.G.Buchsbaum@uscg.mil]
Cc: Howell, Randy[randy.howell@bsee.gov]
From: Cool, Richard
Sent: Mon 12/15/2014 4:51:45 PM
Subject: Discoverer Deck Drainage
[Chukchi General Permit AKG288100.pdf](#)
[Discoverer deck drainage](#)

LCDR Buchsbaum:

I contacted LCDR John Cashman last week, at the recommendation of Mike Adams, EPA, regarding this deck drainage issue. We discussed the issue via phonecall. He also apprised me that he would forward my inquiry to you for further follow-up.

I am contacting you to bring you up-to-date regarding my discussions with Shell on this matter. I am copying Randy Howell, my main BSEE contact, for his information and in case he has any new information that might contribute to our joint understanding on what Noble is planning to do with deck drainage and the functions of this apparent Clarifier discussed below.

As I pointed out to LSCDR Cashman, my effort is to understand any applicable USCG requirements as a means to avoid conflicts regarding potential 2015 Shell drilling actions using the Discoverer under the EPA 2012 Chukchi NPDES general permit (attached).

EPA Region 10 NPDES Permits Unit and NPDES Compliance Unit are working with Shell regarding NPDES general permit implementation for the 2015 drilling season. At a meeting on Friday, December 5, Shell staff (Heather Ptak and Lana Davis) apprised me that Noble was proposing to collect all deck drainage (DD) (contaminated and uncontaminated) and divert it initially to a Clarifier (equipped with an oil content meter (OCM)). As I understand this proposal, the commingled DD would be discharged overboard if the OCM readings were less than 15 ppm oil but the Clarifier effluent would be diverted to an oil water separator if the OCM showed 15 or greater ppm oil. As of Friday, Dec. 5, the Shell staff were not aware of whether USCG was requiring this commingled DD collection or if this was a Noble reaction to the USCG/DOJ investigation.

Shell staff were going to continue their discussions with Noble about the NPDES general permit requirements, Parts II.C.2. and C.3 (p. 36) but I have not heard anything new since that initial December 5 discussion.

This initial Shell discussion was summary in nature. On Monday, December 8, I sent the attached email to Ms. Ptak and Ms. Davis in an effort to clarify the proposal and to ask for additional information on the Clarifier functions. This attached email refers to an "alternative discussion." Shell staff were brainstorming alternatives including the possibility that any contaminated DD would be diverted to the OWS directly (avoiding any commingling with uncontaminated DD in the Clarifier). It was not clear to me whether Shell had discussed or proposed this alternative to Noble. Shell staff are working on getting a response to my December 8 email.

I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this DD issue with you at your convenience. Again, I am interested in understanding if there are any USCG requirements, whether in regulation or otherwise (e.g. under the proposed plea agreement and environmental compliance plan), that might be controlling Noble's DD management and resulting in the proposal discussed herein. I am also interested in understanding how the USCG would regulate the Clarifier and its discharges.

Thank you in advance for your insights and help.

Rick Cool

NPDES Compliance Unit

U.S. EPA Region 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900, OCE-133

Seattle, WA 98101

Phone: (206) 553-6223

Fax: (206) 553-1280

